BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Education Report

PRINCE RUPERT IS READING!

Prince Rupert's Summer Read and Play program is an intensive three-week program for at-risk, six- and seven-year-old students pre-selected by their classroom teachers. The students benefit from literacy activities in the morning, are given a nutritious snack and lunch, and then enjoy recreational activities in the afternoon. The program is a collaborative effort by the Ts'msyen Bands and the school district. ***Read more.***

Minister Bond works with a student in the Summer Read and Play program at Lax Kxeen elementary school.

EXTREME READING

The 16th annual B.C. Summer Reading Club called "Extreme Reading" is geared toward action-packed books. Young readers of all ages, abilities, and tastes should visit a public library to join the 80,000 other B.C. children set to read and enjoy fun reading records, helpful booklists, colourful stickers, cool activities, and more. ***Visit the website.***

HOT TOPIC

Together with school boards, educators and Aboriginal leaders, our government has been working hard to help B.C.'s Aboriginal students succeed. Last year, 48 per cent of Aboriginal students completed school – a six-per-cent increase since 2000/01. But there is still much work to be done. To support Aboriginal students, earlier this month our government signed two groundbreaking agreements with First Nations in B.C.

One agreement is between the Province, the federal government and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). Under this agreement, FNESC will work with interested First Nations to assist them in developing education laws and establishing Community Education Authorities to deliver education programs and services. First Nations will be responsible for certifying teachers and schools and establishing curriculum.

The other agreement is between the Province and FNESC. One of the key goals of the Transformative Change Accord the Province signed with First Nations and the Government of Canada in November was to close the gap in education. This agreement is a significant step in that direction.

Under the agreement, students graduating from First Nations schools will be eligible to receive the provincial graduation certificate should they meet all the necessary requirements. First Nations and B.C. will also work together to develop culturally appropriate curriculum.

These agreements advance the new relationship between B.C.'s First Nations and our government. It is a respectful relationship built on a shared goal: the success of B.C.'s Aboriginal students. As the first province to take such action, B.C. is likely to be a model for the rest of the country.

Read more.

Message from Minister Shirley Bond

The suggestions and concerns of our education partners are important to this government, to the Ministry of Education, and to me. That's why we have established a number of ways to hear from our partners – such as The Learning Roundtable and the Education Advisory Council.

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

One of the most valuable ways that students, parents and school staff can have their say is through the annual satisfaction survey. Recently, more than 192,000 students, parents and staff completed the sixth annual satisfaction survey – the largest of its kind in Canada. Questions were developed with input from all our partner groups, and covered a number of aspects in education.

I'm very pleased to say that we are making strides in many areas, most notably in school safety. More B.C. students feel safe at school and fewer students report being bullied. In fact, compared to four years ago, more students in every grade surveyed report feeling safe.

Every B.C. school should be a school in which students feel free to focus on learning and achieve their best.

I would like to thank the 192,000-plus students, parents, teachers and staff who filled out the survey. These survey results will now be used by parents, educators and school districts when they develop their accountability contracts and school plans – key education documents aimed at improving student achievement. Remember to take part again next year, and encourage others to do the same.

Read more.

Reading Corner

"The Wonder in Water"

Written by Diane Swanson

What, other than water, is in a raindrop? Well, among other things, slime. That's right: slime! This brief book is sure to engage young readers. Diane Swanson has published more than 60 books, focusing mostly on science and nature. She makes her home in Victoria. This title is suitable for students in grades 3–7.